

Channel catfish

Ictalurus punctatus



Similar Species: Blue catfish

Identification: Slender for a catfish, deeply forked tail fin, rounded anal fin, body marked with pigmented spots, spots obscure in large adults. (Blue catfish lacks dark spots on body and has a straight-edged anal fin.)

Channel catfish were native to the Missouri River drainage in South Dakota. Stocking programs have further distributed this fish to reservoirs and natural lakes in the state. They are omnivorous and eat a variety of plant and animal species. Channel catfish prefer depressions, undercut banks, and submerged logs for spawning when water temperatures are around 75 F. Adults often concentrate in larger deep pools in rivers around submerged logs. Channel catfish are a popular game fish, sometimes live more than 10 years, and can exceed 30 pounds.

